A Spirit Within

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A Spirit Within

by Sunshine_and_fuckin_rainbows

Summary

Juno Steel sees ghosts. Most frequently, the ghost of his 19 year old brother, Benzaiten. Peter Nureyev doesn’t believe in ghosts. When Juno confesses to him, Peter doesn't believe him. Benzaiten decides a light possession would convince Peter that ghosts are real, but it turns out entering a body is much easier than leaving it. Now Juno has to figure out how to get his brother out of his boyfriend, while Peter learns how to deal with a mind that is much more crowded than he would like.

Notes

Thanks for reading! this submission to the minibang fic has many artists! to see their amazing work, check me out on tumblr! @psychoticsherlockian !

Chapter 1

Deep space. There was a sense of beauty to the nebulae and stars dancing around, an endless swirl of colors and lights. The lady watching the ethereal display was Juno Steel. Former private eye, current thief, and long time psychic. Only a year after the most tragic event of his life, the death of his darling brother, Juno learned that he wasn't alone when Ben showed up one day. Ever since then, the daring detective and his super smart brother had been helping citizens of the universe, both living and dead, with wacky adventures along the way. And now Juno Steel was on the case again, heading towards treasure and falling for every pretty face that looks like they could maim Juno—

Juno shook his head, willing the thoughts away. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

He felt a deep chill run through him, before Benzaiten Steel appeared next to him. He was forever 19, wearing the same rainbow sweater he had on when he died, dulled by his translucency. His long dreaded hair was loosely tied back, keeping them out of his face. He wore a wicked grin that Juno was all too familiar with. "I'm monologuing. I figure, you monologue allll the time, so maybe it's like, fun or something. I see why you enjoy it so much!"

Juno rolled his eyes as he walked away from the ghost. "I don't monologue!"

Ben floated after him, an unimpressed look on his face. "Uh huh…"

"Shut up!"

Juno ignored the younger spirit as he strode out of the observatory. He shook his head. Ever since he started to see ghosts, Ben had been by his side, for better or worse. Multiple attempts of getting him to cross over failed, so now his brother, who should be somewhere peaceful instead of a random ship in deep space, follows him around.

He felt a cool poke in his mind. "You're monologuing again."

Juno mentally growled at his brother to get out of his head, waiting until he felt the familiar chill. "How many times do I have to tell you not to hang in there unless I agree?"

“Oh, at least four more times.”

Juno groaned again. “Let’s just go, I think we have a mission.”

Benzaiten nudged his shoulder, phasing through Juno slightly. “Well what are you waiting for? Let’s go!”

Juno held in his sigh, if only because the crew were around him. Instead he decided to ignore Ben, and sat down at the table. Soon he felt a warm hand on his knee, and he glanced over.

Peter Nureyev gave him a dazzling smile as he settled into the seat next to Juno, folding his long legs under the chair. His hair fell softly into his face, the usually styled strands laying naturally. His fox grin was small, growing only as he trailed his hand to mid thigh and squeezed before finding Juno’s hand to hold.

“Awww, Supersteel, isn’t that so sweet? Juno and his little murder boyfriend!” Ben cooed, leaning close enough that he was practically cheek to cheek with Peter, who absently itched the cold spot growing on his cheekbone.

“Juno darling, is it me or is it a bit cold in here?” He shivered, Benten snickering behind him.

“Must be the air vent. I wouldn’t worry about it.” He shot a quick glare at his brother, who only laughed harder.

It was just then that Buddy glided in, smiling at the crew around her. “Good afternoon everyone. Let’s get started.

Juno tried to focus, but Ben was extremely energetic today, and seemingly made it his personal mission to get his living brother to crack. He managed to get the gist of the plan between the songs and annoying noises. It was a simple bank theft. Rita cuts the cameras, Peter makes a scene up front, the rest head in to get the cash.

“—and Juno, you’re going to head up the side of the building via the water drain, and crawl through the vents. Are you up to it?”

Juno only had a moment to panic before he felt a cold rush push through him and envelop him completely.

“Yeah, sure.” Ben gave his best impression of Juno, pleased that the Captain simply nodded and continued with her plan.

Ben and Juno had a certain agreement. They learned quickly when Supersteel was in the PD that Juno had some things holding him back. Such as flexibility and a horrible fear of heights. However, Benzaiten had no such fears. So they struck up a deal. Ben can possess Juno, do the things his brother is unable to do, and in turn, Ben has some time to eat ice cream and swim and any other living activities he had been missing.

He felt Juno nudging against him in annoyance, and Ben can practically hear the irritated grumbling in the mental press. He gently nudged back. If he were to get Juno stretched out enough to climb buildings in a couple hours, he had to start right away.

After the meeting, Peter hummed and nudged Juno, “Darling, I’ve been meaning to ask you, aren’t you afraid of heights?”

“Yeah?”

“So how do you get the confidence to do such daring stunts?”

Ben shrugs, a soft smile on his face. “What can I say? When I’m on missions, it’s like I’m a different person.”

He ignored Juno’s groan for Peter’s soft smile. Another hand squeeze, and the thief was gone. Benten sighed, stretching Juno’s arms above his head. He let out a huff. Stiff as a board. They had a lot to do.

The heist went off without a hitch, with Ben getting through the vents with no worries. In no time at all, Juno was laying in his room, with Ben floating nearby,

Juno hummed as he looked at the ceiling. “Hey Ben?”

The spirit looked over. “If you say you’re sore one more time—”

Juno waved a hand “No, not that. Though I am sore.” He gave a soft sigh. “I think I want to tell Peter the truth.”

Ben sat up in shock. “But you’ve never wanted to tell him!”

“I know...”

“Not during that whole ordeal in the tombs, or after when you le—”

“I know!” Juno gave another sigh. “I know, Benny. But I was a different lady then. And maybe he deserves the truth, a sign of trust.”

Ben also sighed, laying next to his brother on the bed. “Okay, Supersteel. If you want to, I’ll be with you. I always am.”

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Peter Nureyev tried not to feel nervous as he headed towards Juno’s room. The lady wanted to talk, and a part of him felt the heat of anxiety at those words. Their heist had gone off without a hitch. Why would Juno need to talk? He was still talking himself in circles when he knocked on the door. He was let in with no preamble.

Juno’s room was always freezing. Peter swore that he needed a jacket in there at all times. “You wanted to talk?”

“Yeah, please, have a seat.” Juno scooted over to make room, and Peter carefully folded himself onto the open spot.

Juno’s room was always cozy, Peter thought. The well worn quilt adorned the bed, and framed pictures of Juno with people he cares for are on the dresser. Some of Rita, his brother, a few of his Martian friends he didn’t recognize, and even one of the two of them on the beach of Io, where Peter was badly sunburned but still smiling in the photo, face squished against the lady's. Juno had clothes strewn about the floor, but not yet bad enough to be considered a problem. Just a few shirts here and there.

He was interrupted from his musings by a hand waving in his field of vision. “Hey, Nureyev? Are you listening? This one is kind of important.”

Peter blinked. “Sorry, darling. Yes, I’m listening.”

Juno takes a deep breath, his face more vulnerable than Peter had ever seen him. “Nureyev, I… see ghosts. My brother, Ben, he’s here, and a lot of the things I do during heists, the climbing and crawling? That was him.”

Peter blinks. Juno must be joking. But his face was so open. The taller man laughed nervously.

That was the wrong reaction, as Juno’s face closes off, and he looked disappointed. “You don’t believe me…”

Peter wanted to console his love, tell him that of course he believed, Juno would never lie to him, but Peter was also trying to be more honest. “... darling, ghosts aren’t real. Maybe this is a side effect of
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that radiation? I'm sure Vespa could help you out—"

Juno smacked the pillow in anger. "Damn it, Nureyev, I'm not lying! And it's not radiation poisoning! You know what? Forget it. Forget I said anything. You can leave now. Sorry to waste your time," he practically spat.

Despite being honest, Peter felt guilty at how upset Juno was. "Hey... I'm sorry."

Juno's eye widened, and he shook his head slightly. "No, that is a terrible idea."

Peter was confused. "W-what is?"

Juno was looking past him, and he was still shaking his head. "Ben, seriously, don't!"

Peter frowned. "Juno, you're scaring me, should I get Vespa?"

He stood up, but before he could move, Peter felt a wave of extreme cold. It seeped into him, spreading like a disease through him. He tried to shiver to make it go away, but it only got colder, until it finally crawled up his neck into his hairline. Suddenly his mind felt full, and a dull migraine started. He was being mentally squished and he did not like it.

Then to Peter's horror, his mouth started moving, and his voice came out, but he was not the one who was talking. "Oh Supersteel, I forgot what depth perception was like! Oh, oh! Now this voice! So smooth! So soft! No wonder your Peter likes to talk. I would too if I had this voice all the time!"

Juno looked just as horrified, with a flash of anger in his eye. "Benzaiten Steel, get out of Nureyev! You're freaking him out, and frankly, it's really weird!"

Nureyev was shaking, and not just from the cold inside him. "J-Juno? What the hell is going on?"

Before the lady could respond, the cold spread again, and he could feel his face moving against his will. A grin stretched uncomfortably across his face. "Oh, I'll tell ya what's happening, Petey. You're being possessed. But tell me, do you believe in ghosts now? Or should I keep going? Because I can do much much more!"

He felt his arm moving, messing up his own hair playfully. Peter had never been more scared. Yes! Yes he believed in ghosts! He'd believe in the goddamn tooth fairy right now if it would make this stop!

His voice moved again. "Now, that's not very believable. The tooth fairy? Really! I am not a tooth fairy."

Juno looked furious. "Ben! Get out of him right now!"

Peter felt himself sigh. "Oh okay…"

The cold swirled in him, freezing him from the inside. After a while, his mouth moved unwillingly once more. "So, Supersteel, funny story… I'm stuck."

Juno froze. "What do you mean you're stuck?"

"Well, I tried to leave, and no matter how hard I tried, I can't get out"

Peter was freaking out. Stuck? What does he mean stuck!? Ben spoke through him again. "I just explained what I mean, Peter. Man, you really do zone out a lot, huh?"

The last thing Peter saw was Juno reaching out and saying that they'll 'figure it out' before he fell back in a dead faint.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> CONTENT WARNING!! this chapter contains mentions of previous drug use! if you dont want to read, when juno starts explaining how he sees ghosts, skip down to the line "what did you do?"

Peter woke up on Juno's bed, the former detective sitting up and reading next to him. He stretched slightly. "Juno darling, I had the strangest dream…"

Before Juno could say anything, he felt a cold spread across his hair. A soft voice spoke in his mind. 'Yeah, sorry, it wasn't a dream…'

Peter shot straight up, looking at Juno's pitying face with wild eyes. "Juno, what the fuck!?"

Juno gave a soft hum. "What do you remember?"

Peter frowned. "You asked to talk to me, then you said that you talk to ghosts, and then-" he paused. Then he got possessed by the ghost of Benzaiten Steel.

'Hey, no need to be so formal, considering we're sharing a head. Feel free to call me Ben,' the voice in his head said.

Peter held in a sigh. "How do I get rid of him?" He ignored the indignant cry in his mind as he focused on his boyfriend.

"I don't know, but we'll find out."

"Can we just sage him out?"

"NO!" Juno and Ben yelled at the same time, making Peter's ears ring. Juno sighed. "Most of the 'get rid of ghosts' tools are painful to them."

Peter nodded. "So, we find something new.."

He mentally groaned. So he was stuck with some kid in his head. The cool presence in his mind sounded upset. 'Some kid?? I just told you my name!' Peter conceded that he did know Ben's name, but that didn't change the fact that he was still unable to get out. Benten called out again. 'What about Rita?'

Peter parroted the thought, and Juno paused in thought. “If anyone could find a way…”

He suddenly stood, grabbing Peter’s hand and leading him out. He barely had time to grab the quilt off of Juno’s bed before he was led out. Being possessed seemingly made one a bit cold.

The two (or possibly three? Peter wasn’t sure) headed across the hall, where Juno walked in without knocking. Peter followed behind, unsure of the polite way to barge into her room.

Rita’s room was cluttered and colorful. Layers and layers of posters covered the walls, various stream posters meshed together. The entire bed was buried under a pile of pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals. And just visible in the middle of the pile was Rita, who was watching a stream from her comms propped on the table in front of her. She looked up and smiled widely. “Mistah Steel! Mistah Peter! Did you come to watch ‘Curse of the Dragantula’ with me? I'm only five hours and twelve minutes in!”

Juno shook his head. “Rita, we need your help. It’s Ben.”

She looked around the room “Oh! Hello Ben!”

Peter hated how he was already getting used to the cold in his blood, the way he moved like a marionette. Ben grinned widely. “Hey Rita!”

She paused, her gaze slowly shifting over to him. “Benten! You shouldn’t be in there!”

Ben shrugged, Peter’s shoulders bouncing in a mildly uncomfortable fashion. “That’s the problem! Seems like I’m stuck in tall, dark, and anxious!”

Peter resented that description. Ben did not care.

She nodded sagely. “Soooo, let me guess. You three want me to find a way to fix this, while also keeping this all hush hush so the crew doesn't know, so you can have super fantastical adventures without them knowing?”

Juno shrugged. “More or less.”

Rita hummed. “What’s in it for me?”

Peter wanted to tell her that he will buy her thousands of creds worth

of snacks, but considering Ben was enjoying the autonomy, those words never left his mind.

Juno shrugged. “I’ll… do a lady’s night stream marathon with you. You choose the streams, I buy the snacks and nail polish?”

“Deal!” She pulled her arms out of her pillow cave, and started typing on her comms, her stream still playing in the background. “I would have done it for a hug, but no take-backsies!”

Juno groaned, a smile tugging at his lips. ‘Those two have always been really close. Juno deserves someone almost as amazing as me, supplied Ben. Peter wished he was in control so he could roll his eyes.

The three of them were interrupted when their comms all went off, a message from Buddy. Another family meeting. Ben groaned loudly. ‘Oh I hate these. The sentiment is nice, but they’re soooooooooo boring!’ Peter hesitantly agreed. Those meetings were certainly… dense. And if someone, like a teenage ghost, didn't have a personal stake in the mission, it would be dreadful.

But, Peter did have a personal stake in the meeting, so the three of them headed to the dining room, an annoying Benten whining in his mind the entire way there. Peter huffed slightly. “Hey can you be quiet?”

Ben’s only response was to complain louder. Juno frowned “He’s being annoying, isn’t he?”

“Oh, absolutely—-” that cold forced his way through, shoving Peter to the back of his mind. “—not! Ben is so wonderful and perfect and amazing! In fact, he’s my new best friend! Sorry, Supersteel!”

Juno’s frown deepened. “Don’t interrupt, Benten. That’s rude.”

Ben could hear Peter's mind agreeing, but he seemed pretty shaken. Maybe he should be a little more careful with the new brain mate. Peter also agreed to that, but didn’t seem to have the emotional energy to force his way back up front. Guess Ben gets to pretend to be Peter Nureyev a bit sooner than he imagined.

Ben noticed Juno’s glare as he sat down, but he had no time to focus on that. He had to get into the mind of Peter Nureyev. Check, that was done. Now he had to act the part. He straightened up, but not too much, then used that added height to slink his noodle legs over Juno. Peter gave a small argument about his legs being ‘lean’, but Ben

mostly ignored it.

Buddy strode in, plans in hand. She set the holos onto the table. Ben tried to focus, he really did, but ohhhh gods he found none of this information interesting. He thought when Juno told him that they were joining space pirates, that it would be a bit more exciting than looking over the same three maps for hours on end.

He was well and truly zoned out when he heard the captain call to him. “Peter, did you hear anything I just said?”

He gave a roguish smile, which he carefully turned sheepish. “I got the important parts.”

Buddy just shook her head. “Well, have Juno explain to you on the way there.” She turned to Juno “Speaking of, Juno, you’ll be the one to climb through to grab the jewels.”

Juno hummed. “I actually haven’t been feeling too well, but Ii know Ransom has been meaning to work out his climbing skills. I’m sure he can grab them, and I’ll keep watch.”

Her gaze turned back to Ben, skeptical. “What do you say, are you up for it?”

“Easily, Captain.” he purred. Peter, who was becoming more active, warned that he was laying it on a bit thick. Ben noted it for future conversations.

He was rewarded with an eye roll as Buddy continued to plan. Ben zoned out again until they were finally released. He was going to go to Jjuno for an update, when he felt Peter nudge in slightly. “Let’s talk, Benzaiten. In private.”

Ben mentally shrugged, and headed to Peter’s room.

It was a nice space, deep purple silk sheets, random curios. Homey, Ben would say. Certainly nicer than Juno’s room, if a bit more impersonal.

Peter took over control long enough to lock the door, Ben felt a wave of heat as Peter fought for some ground in his own body. “Benzaiten, what the hell was that?” His voice was cold, menacing. Benten felt a minor wave of fear at the voice.

He also decided to speak out loud. “What was what?”

“Whatever that was! You shoved me out of the way of my own body, you, I don't know, took my energy!? It was uncomfortable, and I nearly passed out!”

Ben cringed, drawing Peter’s shoulders up. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean —”

The sudden shift in body position was jarring as Peter straightened in pure anger. “What you meant is irrelevant! What happened is that you possessed me against my will, and have proceeded to shove me around like a goddamn plaything! I don’t know how Juno lets you mess with him, but I’m not Jjuno, and if you shove me away like that again, I’ll knock both of us out until Rita finds a way to split us!! Maybe if I’m lucky, I’ll dream of what it’s like to have peace again, before a ghostly brat decided to force his way in!”

Peter huffed, he had yelled in compensation for being silenced earlier. He felt a streak of heat on his cheek. He gently placed his fingers up, frowning. He was crying. Ben was crying.

“Hey, Benten?”

His mouth started to move, but more worryingly, his lip started to wobble. “Peter, I’m so so so sorry, this is all my fault! Juno was just upset you didn’t believe him, and I wanted to fix that, so I possessed you without asking, and I got stuck, and—and—” He let out a soft sob. “I don’t know what to do!”

Peter slumped down, wiping away his tears. “Hey, it’s alright, kid. Don’t cry. We’ll figure this out, okay? We just got to work together. If we’re fighting for control, all we’ll get is more frustrations.”

“Okay. So what do we do?”

“First, don’t take over my body completely without permission. I’ll be sure to give you some leeway so you aren’t trapped either. Secondly, if we need help, if it’s me using your skills or you trying to blend in, we ask.”

Ben pulled back slightly, giving Peter more control. ‘Okay. That’s reasonable. I’m so sorry, Peter.’

“Hey, it’s fine. I'm sorry I called you a brat. You’re not. I’m just... a bit scared.”

The cool swirled again, but in a more pleasant way, like an autumn

breeze. ‘What, you’re afraid of ghosts, old man?’

Peter gave a surprised laugh in response. “I guess I am, punk.” Peter hummed. “Now, did you get any of what Buddy said? Because I didn’t.”

The soft swearing in his mind was enough of an answer. This wasn’t the first time Peter had let his mind wander during a briefing. He stretched slightly, scrubbing at his face. They’d find Jjuno and get the plan from him.

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Juno looked around for Peter after the meeting. Considering how quickly he ran out of the room, he had to assume the worst. It only took him a few minutes to bump into the thief in the observatory.

It would take Juno a while to get used to a possessed Peter. He looked mostly the same, the only tells so subtle that he doubted anyone other than him had noticed. He slouched slightly, he looked tired. Most notably were his eyes. Usually a golden brown, it was jarring to see the electric blue eyes that matched his own on his boyfriend’s face.

Said blue eyes were red with tears. Peter blinked in surprise. “Oh, Juno, there you are.”

“Are you two alright?”

“Oh, we’re fine. We missed what Buddy said, but you can tell us later.”

Juno nodded “Peter, how are you holding up?”

The taller man grimaced. “Considering that I didn’t believe in ghosts yesterday, as well as one could be.”

Juno felt uncomfortable. “I, uh.. Can I help you with anything?” After all, he felt like it was his fault this happened. He didn’t stop Ben.

Peter uncharacteristically puffed his cheeks out, thinking. “I suppose that I’m curious about how all this began? Have you always seen ghosts?”

Juno blinked. He hadn’t been expecting that to be the response. “Oh, no, I wasn’t born with this. I was twenty, and Ben had died a year
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prior. I was... not in the best place."

The lady took a deep breath, looking away from Peter's curious face and Benten's sad eyes. "I had found an entire vial of Petals, stuck in an evidence locker after some officer pulled it off the streets. And, I don't know, I guess I felt so bad I was willing to see if it made people feel as good as they said it did. I took one, felt nothing, took one more, still nothing. So I took the whole vial. I didn't even have a chance to feel the effects before I was on the ground. I woke up in the hospital.

"The first thing I heard when I woke up was crying. And I knew that wasn't Ma, unless she was upset that I was still alive. When I dared to open my eyes, I wasn't so sure I lived after all. It was Ben, the same Ben who I found. He was even wearing the same gaudy rainbow sweater he died in. And he was cursing me out, demanding how I could be so stupid and why I would scare him like that?"

Peter's voice was quiet. "What did you do?"

He gave a soft smile. "I screamed. My dead brother was in my hospital room. He didn't get a chance to say anything before the doctor came in, insisting that it was a nightmare. But Benten still stood there, just as shocked as I was. When we were alone, he demanded to know if I could see him. When I said yes, we just spent the whole day talking. I'm sure the nurses thought I was still doped up.

"Ever since then, he's been here. For better or worse."

After a moment, he looked up, seeing how Peter was teary eyed, though that may have been Ben. "Thank you for telling me. Also Ben says his sweater is not 'gaudy', and he's very offended. Though from what I've heard, it doesn't sound very fashionable."

There was a moment of pause where Peter's eyes looked in the foreground, before he laughed good naturedly. "Yeah yeah, Ii get it kid, you're a fashion disaster."

Before they could say anything more, Buddy came over the comms, stating that the two would be departing in ten minutes. Peter stood, and shivered roughly.

"You okay?"

Peter waved his hand lightly. "I'm fine. It seems playing host with a ghost is a bit colder than Ii would like."

Juno responded by taking off his coat, wrapping it around the tall man. He smiled as he curled into the warm fabric. At the curious look, Juno just huffed. “I can’t have you being so cold you can’t move. The last thing we need is to be found out by Buddy because you have a chill. We should—we should get ready.”

Peter responded with a kiss on Juno’s cheek. “Thank you darling.”

Chapter 3

As Peter packed his things, Ben continued to chime in, mentioning which clothes will be cold and asking how many knives one person needs. Every time Benten mentioned that, Peter added another knife to his bag.

Ben gasped lightly, the now-familiar chill swirling excitedly in the back of his mind. ‘Wanna know what we should get really quick?’

Peter hesitated, indicating to the voice in his head to continue, which Ben did with excitement. ‘We should have a cookie first!’

At this Peter visibly paused. “What? Why?”

Benten huffed. ‘Because Juno never lets me take over unless it’s a mission, and i havent had sweets in almost twenty years!’

Peter rolled his eyes, but opened his bedside drawer, pulling out a Galactic Scout cookie box. Ben wondered how Peter had them out of season, but Peter always made sure to overstock.

‘Wait, you have the peanut butter cookies? But the mint ones are the best!’

“I’m allergic to mint. Now do you want me to eat a cookie or not?”

At the affirmation from the ghost in his mind, he stuffed one into his mouth, eventually tossing the whole box into his bag.

Peter thought, not for the first time that day, that his life was really, really weird.

The thief sighed. It hadn’t gotten weird until he met Juno, but for the life of him, he can’t say he regrets it. Life with the lady was exciting, wonderful. From running from the Kanagawas to staying together in the tombs. From Angstrom to Nova. the apologies and promises and broken heart and fixed relationships. It was a struggle, but he couldn’t imagine what it would be like if he had never met the lovely lady, the brave detect—

He was cut off by a wave of cold. ‘Wow, you really sound like Juno. He needlessly monologues too.’

Peter scoffed. He didn’t monologue!

‘Yeah, you do. It’s okay, though, because it’s pretty charming, if not a bit clunky, as far as poetry goes.’

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They were boarding their shuttle, and Juno watched Peter stroll on, still wearing his trench coat, chewing on what seemed to be a cookie. He sat next to Juno, the bright blue eyes of Ben shining through.

Juno squinted. “He convinced you to have sweets, didn’t he?”

Peter just shrugged, and nodded once. Buddy stepped on, looking at the two of them. “Alright dears, there won’t be any contact with the ship during your mission. Take the shuttle in three days time, and we will pick you up. Good luck.” She gave each of them a smile before walking off.

Once their shuttle was off, Peter hummed. “So… what are we doing?”

Juno sighed. “We’re stealing the Blue Moon Tanzanite collection.”

Juno had found the jewels quite beautiful—deep blue and wrapped in a pretty silver casing. Apparently they were extremely valuable, back from ancient earth. Surely they’d be enough to hold them over financially for a while.

Peter hummed, nodding slightly. “I see, so I assume we have tonight and tomorrow to plan, steal them tomorrow night, hightail it in the morning?”

“More or less. There’s more detail and I have the blueprints, but they’re in the bottom of my bag.”

Juno watched Peter shiver, and blink a bit. “So Supersteel, what about Rita?”

The lady had to pause, frowning. “Did you ask to possess him?”

Ben rolled his eyes. “Yeah, Juno. I did. We made a deal.”

“Oh, uh, that’s good.” He blinked. He wasn’t as used to Ben in Peter as he originally thought. “Rita said she had a few leads, but nothing yet.”

Ben nodded, before scooting closer to Juno. “Oh this will be fun, Juno! Just the two of us, on a fantastic adventure, like the stories from when we were kids!” He paused momentarily. “The three of us. I meant the three of us, because Peter wants to be a third wheel.” he
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laughed. “Okay okay, you’re right. Juno is definitely the third wheel.”

Juno huffed. “I’m no third wheel. I have the plans and actually know what we’re doing. Why are we even talking about this?”

Benten laughed again in lieu of response. They fell into a comfortable silence as they watched the planet grow into view.

The crystal oasis was, for lack of better term, stunning. All across the horizon was endless sand, soft and pink. In the center of the infinite dunes were spires of rainbow crystals. Blue and purple iridescent formations were the centerpiece of the city, with a rainbow of similar pillars spreading out. It was nearly too bright to look at, but he couldn’t find it in himself to look away. As they landed on a clear crystal shuttle pad, he found the inside was just as elegant. The crystals were carved and placed in such a way that the entire room was filled with colorful natural light.

Ben seemed to agree, as he looked around in thinly veiled awe. Juno grabbed his hand, leading him through the customs of the city. One thing Juno liked about Ben being in a physical body next to him was the fact that he could see the pure joy on his brother’s face, even if it was a bit uncanny coming from his boyfriend.

Once they make it to the lobby, Ben carefully detangles his hand. “Hey, I’ll be right back. Why don’t you go check in?”

“Where are you going?”

“Just want to look at some things. Don’t worry.”

No statement had worried Juno more, but he just nodded. “Meet me back here, okay?”

But Benzaiten and Peter were already gone. Juno had a bad feeling about this.

Chapter 4

Benzaiten was impressed. He had been to many beautiful places with Juno, but seeing things through Peter's eyes, it was a whole new experience. His brother was calculating. Focused. But Peter allowed a moment to admire, to wander.

The thief in question bumped in, asking if he should be flattered. Ben thinks so.

Ben told Juno he wanted to look at some things, so he made his way over to the gift shop. It was filled with normal trinkets, snowglobes and mugs, but there were also more expensive things such as fine jewelry and high end clothes. He wandered happily, admiring the knick knacks, when something caught his eye. A simple necklace, an iridescent white, shaped like a moon.

Peter let out an interested hum. 'Thats fun. A moonstone moon stone.'

Benten kept his eyes on it, thinking. He wanted it. That would look so lovely on Juno, and he had missed a fair amount of birthdays.

The voice in his mind responded instantly. 'Then steal it.'

He hid his gasp. Steal it?! He couldn't just steal it!

'Yes you can. We're thieves, kid. That's our job. Also grab that ruby star necklace. Those will match the earrings Juno gave me.'

Ben hesitated, before turning away. He didn't even know how to steal. It was always Juno who would grab things. He just climbed buildings. What if he got caught?

'Woah kid, hey, it's fine. You got this. It's an easy job. Let's go through it together—'

Ben shook his head, looking through some shirts he wasn't actually interested in. Can't Peter just steal it? He is a master thief, after all.

But Peter shot back, a clear smile in the tone of his voice. 'Now, flattery won't get you anywhere. You got this Benten. I'm here if you need me, but this is your bounty. Now, let's survey the scene. What do you notice?'

He looked around. The shop was empty. Only the cashier was there,

and they were clearly focused on their comms. The necklaces were in the back, almost out of view. No cameras, no security. Peter was giving noises of approval, prompting Ben to keep going. Uhh, he looked further. The cashier would occasionally glance up, not necessarily seeing them, just checking the general room. He would have to be quick.

‘Very good! Now, what I would suggest is we buy one item, something cheap, just to build an alibi. Why not a mug? I think Rita collects them. We grab that last. Now, wander over, and wait for her to do a check.’

Ben stood in front of the magnets next to the necklaces, watching the cashier through the corner of his eyes. Once they looked back down to their phone, he took a side step. ‘Easy. not too fast. Don’t draw attention to your movements, Ben.’

He casually grabbed the moonstone necklace and stuffed it into his pocket, the ruby necklace following suit. He preened under the thieves praise. He wandered over to the mugs and found a fun crystal one that Rita would surely like, what with how shiny and shimmery it was. He headed to the counter, and the cashier clearly didn’t expect a thing. He strode out, more proud than he should be.

‘Not bad, kid. How do you feel?’

He felt like a hardened criminal. The feeling was only slightly diminished by Peter laughing good-naturedly at him. The voice in his head reminded him that it was time for them to find Juno. They had a long day ahead of them tomorrow.

Ben agreed, but had one question. Why did Peter have so many pockets? He was like the multitool knife of thieves. Nureyev gave a mock gasp, before agreeing completely. He liked to be prepared for everything. Ben couldn’t fault that.

When they found Juno, he was giving them a suspicious look. “What did you two do?”

“Oh Supersteel, why do you assume we did something?” Upon the look deepening on the lady, he gave a sheepish smile. “Well, I may have gotten you an early birthday present!” He fished out the moonstone.

Junos eye lit up, and he put the necklace on. “Benny, that’s really sweet of you.”

Peter huffed in his mind. Juno doesn't know its Ben that got that for him! What if he got it instead? Ben parroted the thought, and Juno laughed.

"If Peter got me a necklace, it would be much more gaudy than this." Juno quickly raised his hands. "Not that there's anything wrong with the jewelry you get me! I love them. But this is definitely more something Benten would pick."

Juno clearly was trying to climb out of the hole he dug himself. "Well anyway we got our room, let's head up! I am so tired, it's been a really hard day, yeah?"

Benten didn't tell the lady that Peter was laughing as he followed Juno up to their room.

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The room was just as ornate. Gorgeous jewel tones sparkled in the room, the window a thin sheet of crystal, glittering like stained glass in the city lights. A crystal balcony allowed guests to admire the night air, but considering how high up they were, and the fact that the balconies were clear, Juno stayed well away, instead staying safely on the too-plush bed- big enough for the whole crew, not just Juno and Peter.

Juno was settling in, watching Peter comb his hair sleepily. It had been an interesting few days already, with Benten and Peter stuck together. He and Ben had been together since they were born, and never alone once Juno started to see ghosts. But now everything was quiet. Lonely. He never thought he would admit this, and definitely never admit it to Ben, but he missed having him annoy Jun—

"Heeey Juno! I was thinking, what if me and Peter were in a stream? Like one of those psychic shows? I think it would go great!"

Suddenly Juno found that he was missing his brother in his mind less.

"Hey, you never responded! Did you hear my amazing idea?"

"Oh I heard it, it's just a bad idea."

"Wow. Okay. Rude. I cant believe that Peter is my new best friend." He paused for a moment before his jaw dropped. "Wow! I can't believe no one sees my absolute genius. I'm unappreciated in my time."
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“Yeah, a real tragedy. No one appreciating that you want to put wanted criminals on the streams. You’re starting to sound like Cecil.”

“Well you don’t need to get snippy about it, Sarcastic Steel.”

Juno snorts. “Yeah yeah, just come lay down. I need to sleep.”

Benten laid down, facing Juno. It was still weird, seeing Ben's expressions from Peter’s face, the thoughtful look as he settled.

Juno was nearly asleep when he heard a hum. “I never thought this would happen again.”

“Oh? What?”

Ben was looking at him as if he were memorizing the lady’s face. “That I’d be able to have a sleepover like this with you again. Before we would be sharing a mind, or I would be next to you, but not really there. But now?” He poked juno on the forehead. “Now I can actually be next to you. I didn’t think I would ever get that again.”

Juno sniffed. “Benny,” he mentally shook himself. He pretended his voice wasn’t watery. “You’re such a dork.”

“Aww Supersteel, I love you too.”

Juno had to deflect these emotions as quickly as possible. “Yeah yeah, just don’t wrap your arms around me. I remember how you like to hang on like a koala.”

He rolled his eyes. “Okay. Goodnight juno.”

“Goodnight Ben.”

Chapter 5

Peter awoke to a loud snore. He sighed, blinking his eyes open.

Next to him was Juno Steel, snoring loud enough to echo slightly. Even in the dim light, he could see the way his mouth hung open, drooling into the hotel pillow.

The lady was incredibly beautiful.

Peter had always found Juno attractive, screaming in the passenger seat of the Ruby 7, to stuffing an entire globe down the front of his golden dress, to a cranky detective trying to climb out of a window. And now, after all they've been through, the fact that he can be woken up at night because Juno Steel is next to him, snoring, well, that may be one of the best feelings he has ever felt.

He was admiring the lady when he felt a familiar cool at the edges of his mind, silent as the night should be, if not for Juno. Peter waited for a fond yet snarky quip, but it never came.

After a moment, the cool settled. 'He's happier.'

Peter paused. Happier? He looked to the sleeping beauty, and pondered.

Benten continued. 'Before you, before crime and Rita and everything, he wasn't in the best place. Even after he saw me again, he still wasn't happy. He would pretend, smile. Things got a bit better when Rita came around, but even then… It was only when Agent Glass came by that I saw something change. It wasn't perfect, but it was a start. And now? Being on the ship with the crew and Rita and you? This is the happiest I've seen him in a long, long time, and I think a big part of it has to do with you.'

Peter could feel his face heating up. He knew he loved Juno, ever since he tried to climb out of that window. But hearing from such a trusted source that Juno loved him just as deeply…

Ben seemed to notice the train of thought. 'And it seems Juno makes you happy, too.'

Peter smiled, pulling Juno a bit closer to him. As he fell back asleep, he thought that the kid may be right about that.

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Juno woke up with an arm wrapped around him loosely. He mentally sighed. Benten was asleep next to him, peaceful and quiet.

He shoved him out of the bed. “Hey, I said no koala hugs!”

The figure fell to the ground with an undignified yelp. He looked up in sleepy confusion. “Juno, darling, what the hell?”

That wasn’t Ben he shoved off.

“Whoops. Sorry Nureyev.”

“Well Good morning to you too, Juno,” he huffed, detangling his body from the blankets that fell with him. Though he acted upset, he had a smile on his lips. Juno watched as he started to get ready for the day.

They had a few hours to kill, between that morning and the heist. Juno’s original plan was a romantic getaway, but Benten made sure to ruin that plan.

So instead they were going to gamble a bit, swim a bit, then go out for dinner (and dessert, Ben insisted).

Every room of the oasis was as extravagant as the last. The casino area was like all others, when it came to it. Dimly lit, smelling deeply of booze, and full of cheaters and people who thought winning ten creds was a great win. Juno’s kind of people.

They’re walking around the casino when Peter freezes, looking ahead. “Juno, what’s that?”

Juno followed his eyes, and spotted them. Some poor soul, wandering around lazily. Hair done up for a party long over. Dress was torn and bloodied, faded away with time. No one paid her any mind. “That’s a ghost, Peter.”

He’s still looking in surprise when she notices, and fades away.

“I- I’ve never seen a ghost before… do you always see them?”

“I mean, yeah. Most of them just want to be left alone, so it’s not an issue.”

He still seemed pretty upset, so Juno grabbed his hand, and pulled him away.
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The sighting had put a damper on the gambling, so they decided to go straight to the pool. Peter soon let the existential terror fade, relaxing in the artificial sun. Juno supposed that Peter had been dealing with more than his fair share of existential terror the past few days.

Occasionally he would giggle quietly to himself. Most would think he simply thought of a funny joke, but Juno was sure Benten was giving Peter a stream of consciousness of whatever was on his mind. Ben could never stand being still, so Peter's sunbathing must be killing him.

Chapter 6

Peter carefully put on his black gloves, changing for the heist. Dinner was lovely, to be sure. Even if Benten was talking a mile a minute the entire time.

Juno came in as Peter slipped on his black sneakers. He was also dressed in dark clothes, which Peter found to be quite attractive. He could feel Ben gagging.

Juno was unaware, smiling softly. “You ready?”

“Almost, darling. These shoes are just a bit tight. Just a moment.”

They headed out, sneaking through halls and avoiding other guests. Soon they were by the safes, and the easy part was over. It was Peter’s, or more accurately Ben’s, job to wiggle through the vents.

It was a long way there, and Peter was just getting used to the awkward shimmy he wasn't usually capable of when his mind partner started to get bored.

‘I still hear your voice when you sleep next to me. I still feel your touch in myyy dreamms!’

It was of no matter to peter, for he could blo—

‘Forgive me my weakness but I don’t know whyyyy.’

He could block—

‘Without you it’s hard to surviveee!’

He could jus—

‘CUZ EVERYTIME WE TOUCH, I GET THIS FEELING!’

He c—

‘AND EVERYTIME WE KISS I SWEAR I CAN FLYY-YYYY!!’

He nudged at the voice. He has to focus, and while usually he was fond of classical music, this was far too distracting a rendition. If Benten could please sing just a tad quieter.

Junos voice crackled in his earpiece. “Hey, you alright? You haven’t moved in a while.”

“Oh, fine, I'm fine. Just... distracted.”

“He’s singing again, isn’t he?”

“Please, how do I make him stop?”

A soft laugh from the lady. “You can’t.”

Benzaiten continued his rendition happily, not caring of the minor dismay he was causing.

With a silent huff, Peter continued, trying and failing to tune out the song. He had to remember. Was it the second or third right?

‘NEED YOU BY MY SIDE!!! Third right, Peter! DUN DUH DUH DUH DUHH DUN DUH—’

Ah yes. The third right. He turned accordingly. His personal concert continued to ring through his mind. At least Benzaiten Steel was a good singer.

One problem with having the song in his head was that he couldn’t hear himself. Specifically, he was crawling louder than he intended.

Peter wiggled his way out of the vent, landing to a blaster against his nose. “Ah! Lovely evening tonight.”

“Get on the ground!” the guard yelled.

“Oh of course, but that ground is so dirty, don’t you think?”

“Now!”

Peter complied, singing softly. “With a taste of your lips I’m on a ride —”

The guard jabs his gun at the thief. “Shut up!”

“Sorry, just got a song stuck in my head,” he said lazily.

Benzaiten nudged in his mind. Were they really going to comply? He thought Peter was a master thief!

Benzaitens worries were silenced as the guard dropped to the ground,

Juno having stunned them. Peter stood up, brushing dust off of him. “There you are, darling. Your brother was starting to get concerned. Shall we?”

They rush down the hallways, hiding in every shadow. There was still a long way to the vault, but only one access point.

Peter felt the familiar rush of exhilaration, his sneakers softly padding down the carpeted hallway. This was his favorite part, the heat of the moment, the only thing between them and their goal quick wit and a bit of dumb luck. He did his best thinking in those moments.

Ben nudged him again, making fun of his apparent monologuing. Peter nudged back. He might not have gotten caught if someone hadn’t decided to sing classical music at the top of their ghostly lungs.

Ben was going to respond, when Juno placed a hand on Peter’s chest. “There it is, behind that door.”

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Juno led Peter down the hall of the casino. He had already gotten caught once because he couldn’t focus, so he didn’t trust the possessed thief to make it there alone. Not that he would ever tell Nureyev that.

The door was easy to miss, looking as simple as every other door, with a small sign labeled ‘maintenance’. If he didn't have the plans memorized, he wouldn't have thought anything of it. However he was certain they had the right door, and started to pick the analog lock. He smirked smugly at Peter when it clicked open.

The Blue Moon Tanzanite stones glittered in the low light. The collection was larger than he imagined. He hands Peter the duffle bag. “Grab them, I’ll keep watch. And Benzaiten, save the singing for after.”

He ducked a few times to avoid suspicioun, but getting the jewels was easy, considering no one was ever supposed to make it to the safe anyway, let alone spot it.

It was only a few moments before Peter had grabbed all the jewels, and a few extra items for good measure. They just had to get back to their room before the—

The alarms start blaring. The unconscious guard had been found. Juno swore quietly.
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Peter just gave a smile. “Let’s go to our room, darling.”

They started to head out, and almost made it to the more open parts of the ship, when Peter suddenly leans into juno heavily. “You’re lost,” he whispers.

Juno only barely had time to grab Peter before a guard came by. “Stop! What are you doing in this area!”

“Im so sorry miss, but im a bit lost, could you-”

Peter, or Ben, laughed, and started to drunkenly sing. “CUZ EVVRY TIME WE TOUCH, I FEEEL THE STATIC!”

Juno smiled nervously. “Sorry, he’s a bit of a classical music buff.”

“What’s in that bag?” they pressed.

Peter smiled. “Got some vodka! Want some?” He reached for the side pocket and pulled out a bottle.

The guard quickly declined before escorting them back to their room, Benten singing obnoxiously the entire time. “I’d keep an eye on your boyfriend, he seems a bit... troublesome.”

Juno smiled. “Oh believe me, I intend to. Thank you.”

By the time the door is shut and Juno turns around, Peter is stretching up. “What was that?”

“A way out. Someone had been storing what seemed to be alcohol to sell. I took a bottle, plus a few more to celebrate. It came in handy.”

Juno hummed. “Well, I’m impressed.”

Peter smileed. “Excellent. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’d like to go to bed now, as well as possibly get this awful song out of my head—” he paused. “Yes, it’s awful. Want to be by the Spiced Girls is clearly better.”

He huffed. “Why would they be called the Spice Girls? Were they named after spices? No, I’m pretty sure they’re the Spiced Girls”

Juno fell asleep to the bickering of his boyfriend to his brother.

Chapter 7

They went undisturbed during the night, and found no trouble checking out. Apparently they were trying to keep the whole thing under wraps. Probably for the best, Juno thought. Peter seemed particularly groggy that morning, the blue eyes of possession hazy and half-lidded.

When Juno asked if he was alright, he just nodded. “Restless night is all.”

“He really didn’t like you calling them the ‘Spiced Girls’, huh?”

“No, he did not like calling me the ‘Spiced Girls’ at all. Which I don’t understand why because I’m right.”

“You’re really not.” Juno smiled fondly. “But that’s okay. Come on, let’s go”

As they boarded their shuttle, jewels stored safely underneath Peter’s seat, Juno sighed in relief. They did it. They managed to get the jewels, they didn't get caught, and Benten caused minimal damage to his boyfriend.

Juno was resolutely not looking out the window as the ground fell away. Once he was in space it was fine, but until then, there was a long drop down.

Luckily he was distracted as Peter leaned against him, sighing tiredly into the former detective. Peter’s soft black hair tickled his cheek, and his spindly arm wrapped around his waist loosely. Juno couldn’t resist placing a kiss into his hair, and was rewarded with a pleased hum.

Juno chuckled and leaned his head on top of Peter’s, relaxing into the embrace. He didn’t realize he fell asleep until the shuttle started to dock at the spaceport, the ship shuddering as it entered the artificial gravity of the port.

He groaned slightly, trying to stretch the crick out of his neck. Peter was sawing artificial logs on his shoulder, a drool stain spreading across his shirt. Ew. “Peter, wake up.” He moved his shoulder, bouncing the thief’s face up and down.

The taller thief mumbled, trying to ignore the movement. “Noooo….”

“Come on, we can get sleep on the ship. We’re at the port.”

Eventually he sat up, popping his neck. “Ughh…”

Juno laughed. “Tell me about it. Now let’s go. We need to call our friends.”

They slowly departed, loading into the spaceport, which was crowded and uncomfortable. It was easy to get lost in the masses. A short message to Buddy confirmed that they were already docked. Juno tried to focus, but found Peter’s hand in his very distracting.

“How much further, Supersteel?”

Oh right. He had nearly forgotten about Benten. “Not far. Stay awake. I'm not carrying you.”

“If I remember, when we were little, I would carry you.”

“And I don’t plan on returning the favor,” he muttered.

Another short walk, and they were home. He handed the jewels to Jet, and confirmed with Buddy that they had a few hours before briefing, and he planned to use that to sleep. However he was interrupted by Rita. “Boss!! You’re back!! I have a few ideas how to help!! Find Mistah Ransom and come to my room Pronto!!”

~~~~

Peter was asleep on his feet as he let Ben stumble them into his room. He didn’t sleep at all that night, because some punk kid was giving him a lecture on classical music, like the Spiced Girls and the Spear of Brittney.

Benzaiten sighed in his mind. ‘You know that they’re called the Spice Girls and Brittney Spears!’ he echoed around.

Peter still needed proof of that, because those both sounded so fake.

They were nearly to the room when Juno came up. “We need to see Rita.”

“But Supersteel!” Ben cried. “We were going to take a nap!”

“Well, you can take a nap after she separates you two.”

Peter hummed. Rita first, then sleep. Ben sighed mentally. “Alright
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you two, I guess we can."

They walked over to Rita's room, where she was happily nestled in her squishy mountain of plushies on her bed. "Hi! I have some ideas!"

Both Peter and Ben were interested. Ben sat in her unused office chair. "Alright. Shoot."

She hummed, pulling up a list on her comms. "Did you try forcing it?"

"Of course we did!"

"And you said things like sage hurts."

Peter nods. "Seems to be."

"Garlic?"

"I'm not a vampire!"

She taps on the screen. "Hmmm… Peter, did you formally ask Ben to leave?"

Both Peter and Ben were shocked into silence.

Juno looked incredulous. "You didn't ask?!"

"That hardly seems intuitive." Peter lamely defended.

"Well, are you going to do it?" Rita questioned

"Yes! I just—" He sighed "Benzaiten, I am formally asking you to leave my body."

At first, there was nothing, and just as Peter was starting to feel silly, he felt a heat tingle at his toes and fingers, the sudden loss of a now familiar ice in his veins. Sudden fire crawled up his body, burning and singeing its way up to his mind.

Peter and Benten gasped in unison, and the heat covered him, before settling into a feverish discomfort.

Peter blinked. He looked over to see a worried Juno, Rita, and…

And Benzaiten.

He was young, blue eyes glittering in concern. He had long

dreadlocks, loosely tied at the nape of his neck. He wore black leggings and a gaudy rainbow sweater. He floated a few inches off the floor, legs bent slightly.

Peter blinked. The kid was still there. “Holy shit.”

Rita hummed. “Did it work?’

“Yes, I think it did. Juno, you didn’t tell me he had such horrible taste in sweaters.”

“Hey!” the ghost cried, offended

Juno laughed. “I thought it was obvious.”

“HEY!”

Peter laughed. “We’re just teasing, kid. Your sweater is fine.”

Juno huffed. “Thanks Rita.”

“No problem! Nothing too complicated for good ol’ RRRRRRITA!”

The three left her room, and found themselves in the observatory.

Now that his mind didn’t have a guest, he was able to freely admire the lady. Juno Steel was stunning in the low light, eye glittering with the nebulae he was watching. He seemed relaxed, happy even, a small smile lifting his lips. His eye flicked to Peter, stealing the thief’s breath, and his smile widened. “So, Peter Nureyev.”

“So, Juno Steel.”

“Do you believe in ghosts now?”

“I don’t think I do.”

“What?” Juno sounded shocked. “How?”

“All I’m saying is that I could be convinced a bit more.” He allowed his sharp teeth to bare in a coy smile.

“Nureyev! I’m trying to have a moment!”

He laughs. “Okay, okay. Ghosts might be real.”

Junos face scrunched up in annoyance. “Peter!”

But the taller thief just smiled, moving in closer. “Juno.”

The lady seemed to notice the sudden closeness. He sputtered, encouraging Peter.

“As I said, darling, I can be convinced.”

He pressed his lips to Juno’s, who quickly returned the kiss, wrapping his arms around Peter’s waist. The thief laced his fingers in the lady’s curly hair.

Ben groaned beside them. “UGH! You two are so gross! That pickup line didn’t even make sense!”

But for once, Peter found it much easier to ignore the ghost whispering to him with Juno in his embrace.

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